

MARAD's South Atlantic Region Volunteers Clean Up Wetlands for Earth Day 2005

By Willie Barnes, South Atlantic Region

To celebrate Earth Day, volunteers from the Maritime Administration's South Atlantic Region conducted a cleanup at a local ecological gem, the Pescara Creek Wetlands, located across the street from a commercial shipyard in Norfolk, Virginia. On April 22, volunteers from the Region's office donned coveralls, gloves, and work boots and marched into an urban wetland area to clean it up and plant a river-friendly tree. A juvenile redbud tree was planted, and it will be ready to flower by Earth Day next April.

The South Atlantic Region team of volunteers led by Region Director Nuns Jain walked through upland brush, muddy shorelines, and native wetland plants to retrieve over 2500 pounds of trash and debris. The team also discovered and removed a section of chain link fence and a street sign from under a bridge next to the creek.

The South Atlantic Region staff and volunteers were very appreciative of being highlighted by the Office of the U.S. Secretary of Transportation as the Department's Earth Day 2005 activity. This clean-up effort continues to help in the improvement of water quality for the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The team is happy to partner with the local community and the non-profit conservation group, the Elizabeth River Project, in helping to preserve a valuable natural resource. In the March issue of the *MARAD Update*, Region staff was recognized for its achievements in The Elizabeth River Project's River Stars Program. The Region Office received an Achievement Level Award at the River Stars Recognition Luncheon in Portsmouth, Virginia.



Left to Right: Steve Jackson, Willie Barnes, and Nuns Jain planting the red bud tree.



Left to Right: Beth Vakevainen, Jennifer Fallis, Steve Jackson, Willie Barnes, and Nadine Miltier

MARAD Update

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Publisher

John Jamian

Managing Editor

Susan Clark

Editor

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